

By Suzi Pomerantz, MT, MCC

Several years ago, I had a client facing the same predicament; distrust had become entrenched throughout her large organization of 65 managers and thousands of employees, and she wanted to offer coaching to the top three tiers of leadership. Her original budget would only cover individual coaching for three or four executives.

We custom-designed a solution that included a combination of group coaching, team coaching and individual phone coaching to make coaching available to all 65 leaders without breaking the bank. The results were so dramatic across the organization, they expanded the program, immediately doubling their budget, and then expanded it again for a second year.

A massive, enterprise-wide project required multiple levels of management to work together to produce results, but an obvious disconnect between and amongst leadership was making this impossible. Because the problem was systemic, we knew individual

coaching for select executives would only scratch the surface. In order to elicit real change, we needed to address multiple levels at once.

The answer was coordinated, tiered, synchronized, customized, horizontal executive coaching that provided a blended group, team and 1:1 solution. Each tier had one or more coaching discussions once a month for two-to-four hours:

1. Senior C-Suite Team Coaching

– six executives, senior-most decision-makers in an intact team, one coach. These executives had a strong commitment to become more of a team, but no declared aligned purpose. This group of individual leaders operating in separate silos became an effective, aligned, accountable, collaborative and transparent leadership team, able to mandate culture change as a priority.

2. Director Group Coaching

15 director-level senior leaders, one coach. The directors were sandwiched between the executives and the team leaders. They had never met together before and only knew one another peripherally. They collaborated to resolve emergent issues and common chal-

lenges unique to being in the middle leadership tier.

3. Team Leader Group Coaching

44 team leaders, two coaches the first year expanded to five coaches the second). Morale was low and they needed rules for engagement based on respect. Using accountability as a trust-building framework, they shifted from apathy to commitment, took ownership and improved their problem-solving abilities.

4. Individual Coaching

– one coach provided remote, ad hoc, 1:1 coaching via telephone. These calls provided an outside perspective and new actions for the dozens who scheduled one or more sessions.

The cost of providing 1:1 coaching for everyone would have been well over \$3 million per year. The blended, customized solution was less than six percent of this cost. While there are many approaches to shift the culture and create trust throughout an organization, coordinating a blended coaching solution across the horizontals and verticals of the organization can accelerate the impact while saving money.

By Victoria Trabosh, CDC®, CEC

It is so tempting to do what the client wants without pausing to consider what is best for them. However, you must provide the best level of coaching, at the best time, in the most effective way, for the most significant impact. Given the full range of approaches to affect the company, my advice might give you pause. My opinion is to first provide an assessment of what should be done. In the assessment, you will interview key stakeholders, get buy-in that coaching will bring significant value, come up with a proposal with an agreed upon plan at an agreed upon price, and then deliver the services.

Why is the budget limited? Is it because the company has no budget for development of its leaders? Does it invest in spending money on coaching

services? Financially, are they struggling? Or something else? Whatever the case, money should not drive the decision for them, or you. The value should drive the decision. Your first job is to find out what they need rather than come up with something that fits a budget, but not the company. Then calculate an ROI (return on investment) from the coaching they should expect to receive that will leave them wondering why it took so long to bring in coaching to elevate their organization and its success.

There is an African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." It will be harder to go together if you have not assessed the entire scope and need.

Yes, you will charge for the assessment. You will prepare a written report of your findings and recommendations and meet with the decision makers to learn more and sell your services and strategy to them. Do not prematurely decide what the client needs until you know that what you deliver solves their most important problems effectively and efficiently.

As coaches, we are eager to please. However, a short-term assignment is not nearly as rewarding to them or you as a monthly retainer and strategy to execute. Stand for what you believe is necessary and do not be afraid to walk away if you cannot deliver the services you know are essential. And please, never sacrifice your profitability in the process. •

Are you grappling with a sticky situation?

You don't have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you some different perspectives to consider. Email your situation to: submissions@choice-online.com and put "sticky situations" in the subject line.